8

Beyond Globalization/Anti-Globalization

There is some validity in the phrase 'globalization is what is made of it'. How globalization is constructed, in the media and academic discourse, frames, if not constrains, its meaning for both academics and activists alike. Contemporary discourses of globalization commonly interpret it as a titanic struggle between its advocates and its opponents, between the forces of globalization and those of anti-globalization, between globalists and sceptics, between the global and the particular. These antinomies certainly have heuristic value in helping define what is at stake – in the intellectual and political realms – given the enormous complexity of the subject matter. Hence, we have followed this framework. However, too often, these antinomies can slip into a reification of the academic and political contestation about the nature and significance of globalization. If taken too literally, they can readily tend towards the substitution of rhetoric for rigorous analysis. At this stage it is important to reflect on the current controversies and some of the emerging complexities in the globalist and sceptical analyses.

The making and unmaking of globalization: deconstructing the academic controversy

As Holton, among others, has suggested, globalization scholarship has come in three overlapping but distinctive waves: the hyperglobalist, the sceptical, and the post-sceptical (Holton 2005: 5; Bruff 2005; cf. Held et al. 1999). The wave analogy is useful in so far as it alludes to the successive diffusion and churning over of

distinct research programmes in which core research problematics come to be reappropriated and redefined by new research agendas. Significantly, too, it does not imply a simple notion of cumulative knowledge or linear progress. Building on Holton's schema while modifying it in a number of respects, four successive waves of globalization scholarship can be identified and roughly labelled as the theoretical, the historical, the institutional, and the deconstructive. As with all such schemata, this one is neither definitive nor exhaustive, but rather should be understood as a heuristic for organizing a highly complex field of study.

As manifest in the works of Giddens (1990), Robertson (1992), Rosenau (1990), Albrow (1996), Ohmae (1995), Harvey (1989) and Lawrence (1996), among others, the initial theoretical wave was generally concerned with debates about the conceptualization of globalization, its principal dynamics and its systemic and structural consequences as a secular process of worldwide social change. By contrast, the historical wave, drawing on the historical sociology of global development, was principally concerned with exploring in what ways, if any, contemporary globalization could be considered novel or unique – whether it defined a new epoch, or transformation, in the socio-economic and political organization of human affairs – and, if so, what the implications were for the realization of progressive values and projects of human emancipation (see, among others, Held et al. 1999; Hirst and Thompson 1999; Frank 1998; Castells 1996; Bordo, Taylor and Williamson 2003; Dicken 1998; Baldwin 1999; Gilpin 2002b; Gill 2003; Mann 1986, 2001; Hopkins 2002; Sassen 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000; Hoogvelt 1997; O'Rourke and Williamson 1999; Boyer and Drache 1996; Appadurai 1998; Amin 1997; Taylor 1995; and Tomlinson 2007).

Sceptical of these arguments about structural transformation, the third (institutional) wave sought to assess claims about global convergence (and divergence) by concentrating on questions of institutional change and resilience, whether in national models of capitalism, state restructuring or cultural life (see among others here Garrett 1998, 2001; Swank 2002a; Held 2004; Keohane and Nye 2003; Campbell 2004; Mosley 2003; Cowan 2003; Hay 2000; Pogge 2001). Finally, the fourth and most recent wave reflects the influence of poststructuralist and constructivist thinking across the social sciences, from Open Marxism to postmodernism. As a consequence,

there is an emphasis on the importance of ideas, agency, communication, contingency and normative change to any convincing analysis of the making, unmaking and remaking of globalization understood both as a historical process and a hegemonic discourse. Central to this literature is a debate about whether the current historical conjuncture is best understood as an epoch of competing and alternative globalizations (in the plural), what Stanley Hoffmann has referred to as the 'clash of globalizations', or one of imperialism and empire (although these may not be incompatible) (S. Hoffmann 2002; Rosenberg 2005; Hay 2005; Urry 2003; Bello 2002; Held and McGrew 2002a; Callinicos 2003; Keohane and Nye 2003; Rosamond 2003; Wolf 2004; Saul 2005; Harvey 2003).

These four broad approaches frame contemporary globalization scholarship. Returning to the initial heuristic in chapter 1 (figure 1.1 on p. 5) it is now appropriate to map these four waves of scholarship in relation to the normative (cosmopolitan or communitarian) and explanatory (globalist or sceptic) dimensions of contention. As with figure 1.1 the vertical scale in figure 8.1 represents the contest over the intellectual hegemony of globalization characterized by a privileging either of globalist forms of analysis (the globalists) or alternatively statist or societal forms of analysis (the sceptics). The horizontal scale represents the normative domain, differentiating between cosmopolitan and communitarian forms of ethical reasoning: that is, an attachment to some ideal of the 'good global community' as opposed to the advocacy of a plurality of coexisting 'good national or local communities'. Figure 8.1 constructs the intellectual terrain identifying at least four distinct modes of analysis:

- globalization is taken to be a really existing condition and considered to be amenable to either political reform or transformation (the transformationalists);
- globalization is taken seriously but as a new form of domination to be resisted along with any grand political projects for remaking the world according to cosmopolitan universal principles (the critical globalists);
- the idea of globalization, or its presumed benign nature, is regarded with deep scepticism, and instead the emphasis is on the continued centrality of state power to the improvement of the human condition (the statists);

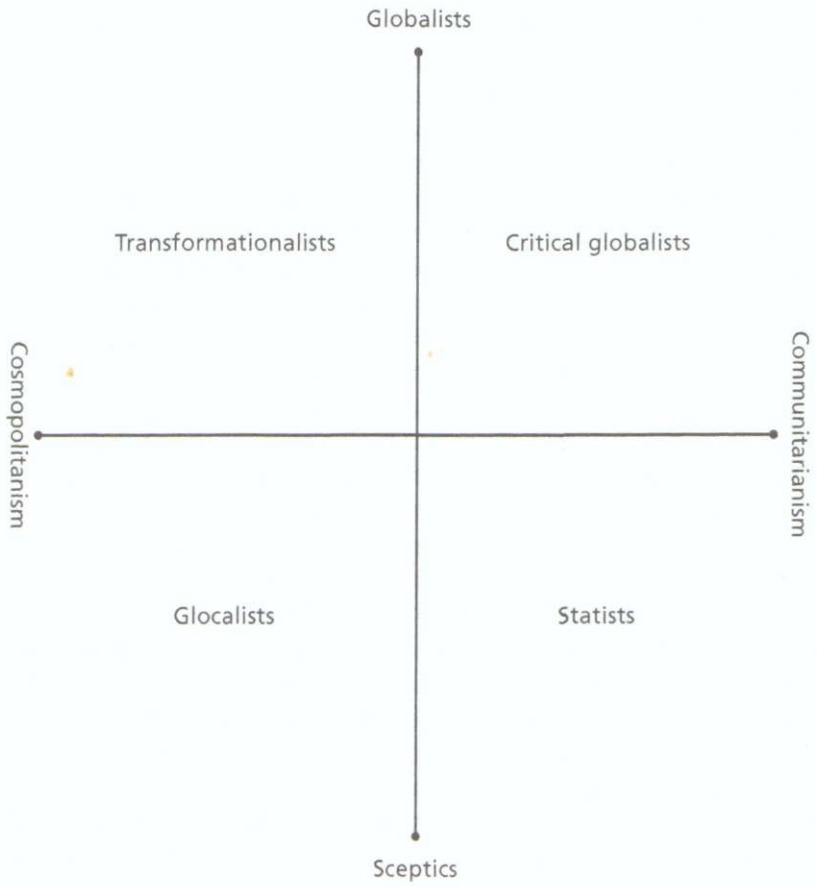

Figure 8.1 The great globalization controversy: the intellectual terrain

- the privileging of the global is rejected and the intermeshing of processes of globalization and localization is emphasized, but with a normative attachment to 'rooted cosmopolitanism' (the glocalists).

Clearly these positions themselves conceal interesting overlaps, not to mention significant differences (of interpretation and ethical commitment) within the globalist and sceptic camps. Nonetheless,

figure 8.1 usefully maps the spectrum of contention, demonstrating a complexity and diversity of views and thereby moving beyond the antinomies of the globalization/anti-globalization heuristic.

The unmaking of globalization: the sceptics' case

Sceptical scholarship echoes Joseph Stiglitz's quip referred to above that 'globalization today has been oversold' (2005: 229). As noted in chapter 1, it is oversold in at least three senses: as a description of social reality (a social ontology); as an explanation of social change (an explanans); and as an ideology of social progress (a political project). In all these respects, most particularly in the wake of 9/11, globalist rhetoric increasingly appears rather hollow. This scepticism comes in two forms: the statist and the localist. Central to statist scepticism is the work of, among others, Hirst and Thompson (1999), Hay (2005); Rugman (2001) and Gilpin (2002b). This broadly realist and historical materialist scholarship holds that contemporary globalization is not historically unprecedented, that the dominant economic trends are towards internationalization and regionalization, and that the idea of globalization has been much more significant than its descriptive or explanatory utility. In effect they argue that critical and transformationalist scholarship significantly exaggerates globalization's empirical and normative significance, arguing that the world remains principally one of discrete national societies or states.

These sceptical arguments have acquired particular force in the current context. For today borders and boundaries, nationalism and protectionism, localism and ethnicity appear to define an epoch of radical de-globalization, the disintegration of the liberal world order and the demise of globalism. Ferguson (2005) suggests that the current epoch has many similarities with the 'sinking' of the 'last age of globalization', which ended in the destruction of the First World War and the subsequent world depression. Saul (2005), in similar vein, argues that the ideology or discourse of globalism, upon which globalization as a 'social fact' or social ontology depends, is rapidly receding in the face of the resurgence of nationalism, ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, and geopolitics. As

Rosenberg (2005) concludes, the current conjuncture demonstrates the follies of globalization theory, not to mention just how far its proponents misread and misunderstood the 1990s period in the context of world historical development. Rather than globalization, the current world order is defined by the reassertion of US hegemony, the rise of a new mode of Western imperialism, interventionism, geopolitics and intercapitalist rivalry. Historical materialist and realist theories of imperialism or geopolitics provide more accurate descriptions and explanations of the current conjuncture than does any transformationalist or critical globalist scholarship (Harvey 2003; Rosenberg 2005; Kennedy-Pipe and Rengger 2006; Kiely 2006; Callinicos 2007). Indeed Rosenberg goes so far as to suggest that the existence of the new imperialism demonstrates not only the intellectual bankruptcy of globalization as description, explanation and ideology, but also paradoxically that ' "globalization" did not even exist' (2005: 65).

These sceptics, on the whole, do not mourn the passing of the discourse of globalization. On the contrary, for many of them it constitutes a welcome return to grounded historical critique, to understanding both the real possibilities and real obstacles to the construction of a better world. For those of a historical materialist persuasion, this requires capturing state power democratically, building a post-capitalist society and developing a progressive internationalism as opposed to the utopia of global democracy; more anti-capitalism perhaps than anti-globalism per se (Tormey 2004). Among those of realist persuasion it means using state power to create the conditions of a more just international order – a form of liberal internationalism. What both share is a commitment to the state as the principal, but not the sole, agent of social and political progress, which is building a better world from the inside out rather than the outside in.

Poststructuralism in the social sciences has encouraged a shift away from macro-social analysis to a concern with the particular, the local, and the micro-social. 'Glocalist' scholarship takes this shift seriously. It seeks to problematize the local-global complex rather than a priori to assert, or presume, the causal primacy of either or to conceive them as in a structurally contradictory relationship. In simple terms, glocalist analysis, which inherits much from third and fourth wave thinking, takes both globalization and

localization seriously without necessarily privileging either in explanations of the social. Holton refers to this as 'methodological glocalism', because it is an approach whose 'defining characteristic . . . is to observe the interpenetration of the two [local and global]' and to 'recognize the co-existence and inter-relations between these various layers of social life', acknowledging that such interrelations 'are not necessarily corrosive or incompatible' since 'the global and the national or local may under certain circumstances depend on each other' (Holton 2005: 191). Glocalist scholarship charts a third course between globalism and statism.

Some of the more influential work in this genre is located within cultural studies, anthropology, and social and urban geography. Brenner (2004), for example, argues that capitalism has always operated at different spatial scales, from the local to the global, but that the restructuring of capitalism in the 1990s brought with it a more complex spatiality. Social relations are increasingly articulated and rearticulated simultaneously across a multiplicity of spatial scales, from the sublocal to the local, national, transnational, regional and global. Thus much of the work on global cities illuminates how they are simultaneously local, national, transnational, regional and global centres of power (Smith 2001; P. Taylor 1995). Rather than conceiving this multiplicity of spatial scales as necessarily organized in a hierarchical or contradictory fashion, Brenner argues that they are mutually constitutive. By this he does not mean that the global and local can simply be dissolved into one another, for they retain their distinctive forms, but rather that explanation of one necessarily requires an account of the other. Brenner's work is a critique of that globalization scholarship which privileges any particular spatial scale: in other words, that suggests that social relations are becoming increasingly deterritorialized, denationalized or alternatively regionalized or nationalized. On the contrary, he argues, the multiplicity of spatial scales are relational, not containers of social relations. Territory still matters, but not in the way in which it is conventionally theorized – as deterritorialization or reterritorialization.

Similar arguments are made in many studies of cultural globalization. Hannerz (1992) and Appadurai (1998), among others, have argued that it is associated with cultural hybridization, fusion or creolism. Stressing the social construction, rather than primordial

origins, of individual and collective identity, they point to ways in which local and global cultural resources are conjoined in the production of new kinds of identities and cultural communities, from the self-identification of Irish-Americans to the indigenization of world religions. To explain these processes of cultural hybridization requires moving beyond the antinomies of the global and the local to a recognition of their mutual imbrication.

Recognition of the complexity and contingency of this mutual imbrication informs the normative thinking of much glocalist scholarship. Although it is animated by a concern to identify the structures and processes of domination which range in, across and through societies, it necessarily rejects the crude binary division between the global as the principal source of domination and the local as the principal source of resistance or emancipation. This produces an interesting blurring of ethical attachments between ethical cosmopolitanism and communitarianism: a rooted cosmopolitanism (Appiah 2005). Such a rooted cosmopolitanism seeks the 'furthering of cosmopolitan norms through rather than beyond the nation-state' (Eckersley 2005). Some emphasize a new localism through which regimes of urban governance harness local, national and global social forces to the realization of cosmopolitan social purposes (Brenner 2004; Smith 2001). Tarrow (2005) highlights the growing significance of rooted cosmopolitanism in the context of growing transnational activism, which blends together local and global struggles. And still others emphasize the strategies of autonomous development as articulated by the Zapatista movement, which, Olesen notes, relies on 'a growing imbrication of local, national and transnational levels of interaction rather than their increasing disconnection'. As with critical globalism, there is no singular normative vision of a better world, only an aspiration for 'a world in which many worlds fit' (Olesen 2005: 54, 12).

The making and remaking of globalization: the globalists

There are broadly two main strands of globalist scholarship: the transformationalist and the critical globalist. Transformationalist scholarship presents a far from benign or economistic reading of

globalization. Among the principal works which share such a perspective, although rooted within different theoretical and methodological traditions, are those of Castells (1997), Rosenau (1990, 2003), Giddens (1990), Held and McGrew (2002a); Held et al. (1999); and Scholte (2000b). They present a rich account of the distinctive features of contemporary globalization from within a broadly historical sociology tradition. They map the scale and complexity of worldwide social relations across all dimensions, from the economic to the cultural, arguing that their historically unprecedented extensity and intensity represents a significant 'global shift' in the social organization of human affairs.

Contrary to an economistic analysis, globalization is conceived as operating across different domains, from the cultural to the political. Nor does it display a simple logic of global integration or convergence. On the contrary, it is considered dialectical, integrating and fragmenting, uniting and dividing the world by creating winners and losers, and by including and excluding locales, as it proceeds. While it generates pressures for socio-economic convergence, these are mediated by domestic factors so that significant divergence, whether in levels of national social spending or economic growth, may often be the result. Rather than imposing a 'golden straitjacket' on all states, its consequences are significantly differentiated. Yet increasingly states and societies confront similar problems of boundary control as the separation of the global and the domestic becomes less tenable. Political problems, from people trafficking to the management of the national economy, are simultaneously both domestic and global matters. This erosion of the internal and external, domestic and international, articulates the growing compression of time and space in an epoch of instant global communications. A resulting structural consequence is that the relationships between territory, economy, society, identity, sovereignty and the state no longer appear as historically fixed and congruent – even if this was imaginary – but rather as relatively fluid and disjointed. For the transformationalists, it is this apparent dislocation or destabilizing of the institutional coordinates of modern social life that is the source of both heightened conflict and insecurity, at all levels, from the local to the global. This dislocation takes many forms, from the political to the cultural. It finds, for example, particular expression in the political domain in

the apparent disjuncture between national sovereignty and the suprastate locus of many aspects of the actual business of contemporary government.

Transformationalist accounts do not imbue globalization with any particular telos, neither an inevitably more prosperous or peaceful world, nor an inevitable emergence of a singular world society or a coming anarchy. However, there is broad agreement that its structural consequences do much to multiply the complexity of modern societies and thereby their governance, while simultaneously creating a range of new transnational problems, from global warming to global financial instability, which are hugely difficult to resolve. One consequence is the restructuring of the state evidenced in the shift from government to governance. Furthermore, since decisions in one country can directly impact on the interests of citizens of other societies, a whole new range of transboundary problems are generated which challenge the efficacy of national democracy. Beyond the political domain, the consequences of globalization present comparable challenges to the organization and functioning of modern societies.

In addition to the structural consequences of globalization, the transformationalist literature has much to say about its distributional consequences. In particular, Castells, among others, argues (contra the Washington Consensus and liberal accounts) that economic globalization is associated with a polarizing and divided world, as the gap between rich and poor widens while much of humanity remains on the margins or is excluded from its benefits (Castells 2000). This structural exclusion and structural inequality, it is argued, is an inevitable consequence of market-led globalization. However, this need not be the case if globalization could be harnessed to the ideals of social justice. The cosmopolitan normative thrust of the transformationalist analysis is thus an argument for ethical or humane globalization, combining economic efficiency with equity or social justice. This is a demand for nothing less than the reform or transformation of actually existing globalization. For Held, Castells and others, this takes the form of variations on a project for global democracy and global justice (Held 2004; Castells 2005; Scholte 2005). It is a project which, building on the reform of existing infrastructures of global governance and civil society, seeks the democratic regulation of globalization

in order to address its more socially malignant structural and distributional consequences.

By contrast critical globalism is perhaps best described as encompassing that 'engaged' scholarship which takes globalization seriously because it is constitutive of new global structures and systems of transnational domination (Mittleman 2000; Rupert and Solomon 2004; Gill 2003; Hardt and Negri 2000; Eschele 2005; Petersen 2004). As such, critical globalist scholarship not only acknowledges the ways in which the organization and exercise of social power is being radically extended and transnationalized by the social forces of globalization, but also how, in the process, new subjectivities and transnational collectivities of resistance are formed. Variously referred to as the 'global matrix', 'global market civilization', or 'Empire', a new globalized social formation is held to be in the making which, according to critical globalist theory, requires new ways of thinking about and acting in the world (James and Nairn 2005; Gill 2003; Hardt and Negri 2000). Issuing principally from poststructural and post-Marxist scholarship, this approach seeks to understand the making and unmaking of these new globalized structures of domination, as well as the possibilities for their remaking or progressive transformation.

Among the more influential of this scholarship is the work of Hardt and Negri. In *Empire* they theorize and explain the emergence of a historically unique form of global domination with globalization at its core. Though they refer to this as Empire, it is distinguished from classic imperialism:

> By 'Empire' . . . we understand something altogether different from 'imperialism'. . . . Imperialism was really an extension of the sovereignty of the European nation-states beyond their own boundaries. . . . In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers . . . (Hardt and Negri 2000: Introduction)

Central to the making of Empire, they argue, are processes of globalization which they consider enduring rather than contingent. These same processes, however, engender projects of transnational

resistance which create the social basis for alternative globalizations in opposition to the totalizing logic of Empire:

> The passage to Empire and its processes of globalization offer new possibilities to the forces of liberation. Globalization, of course, is not one thing, and the multiple processes that we recognize as globalization are not unified or univocal. Our political task, we will argue, is not simply to resist these processes but to reorganize them and redirect them toward new ends. The creative forces of the multitude that sustain Empire are also capable of autonomously constructing a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges. The struggles to contest and subvert Empire, as well as those to construct a real alternative, will thus take place on the imperial terrain itself – indeed, such new struggles have already begun to emerge . . . (Hardt and Negri 2000: Introduction)

Hardt and Negri's 'Empire' has much in common with other neo-Gramscian accounts of the hegemony of a globalized capitalist order (Gill 2003). Both consider globalization as a historically distinctive mode of domination which is not only economic but cultural, social, ideological and political. Both also emphasize the highly contested nature of this domination, articulated in diverse local and transnational struggles of resistance and recognition, from the Zapatistas in Mexico to the World Social Forum, which constitute the solidarist networks of alternative globalizations.

Agency, subjectivity and social struggle are thus vital expository concepts in the critical globalist lexicon. As Evans, among many others, observes, globalization is associated with the emergence of a globalized contentious politics in which local and global struggles are conjoined, since 'the defence of difference and quests for local power require global strategies and connections, likewise transnational social movements must have local social roots' (Evans 2005: 7). These alternative globalizations, which are not necessarily progressive, partly reflect the simultaneous rise of identity politics and of global consciousness, constituting new subjectivities and ways of thinking about and acting in the world. The sources of alternative globalizations are thus to be located not simply in distributional struggles but also in struggles over recognition, whether of indigenous peoples or gender discrimination. This 'globalization from below' perspective focuses attention on

the significance of individual and collective agency, from fair trade consumerism to G8 protests, in the making and remaking of global society.

In certain respects, as with the transformationalists, there is an assumption that, irrespective of its particular form, globalization per se is integral to (post)modernity or (post)modern social life. Corporate globalization is not its sole face and it is not inevitably hegemonic. Nor is globalization per se inherently malign, but rather harbours progressive potential. The principal normative and political question is whether and how that potential is to be realized. In this regard, critical globalism resists the valorization of any singular normative vision of ethical globalization or its institutionalization, whether global democracy or a post-capitalist order, in favour of a radical communitarianism; that is, the positive prospect of coexisting alternative globalizations: a peculiar multiplicity of local and globalized communities (Tormey 2004).

Since all explanatory theories of globalization are implicitly, if not explicitly, normative, disagreement about its essential nature is, in part at least, often rooted in different ethical outlooks. Indeed the most contentious aspect of the study of contemporary globalization concerns the ethical and the political: whether it hinders or assists the pursuit of a better world and whether that better world should be defined by cosmopolitan or communitarian principles, or both.